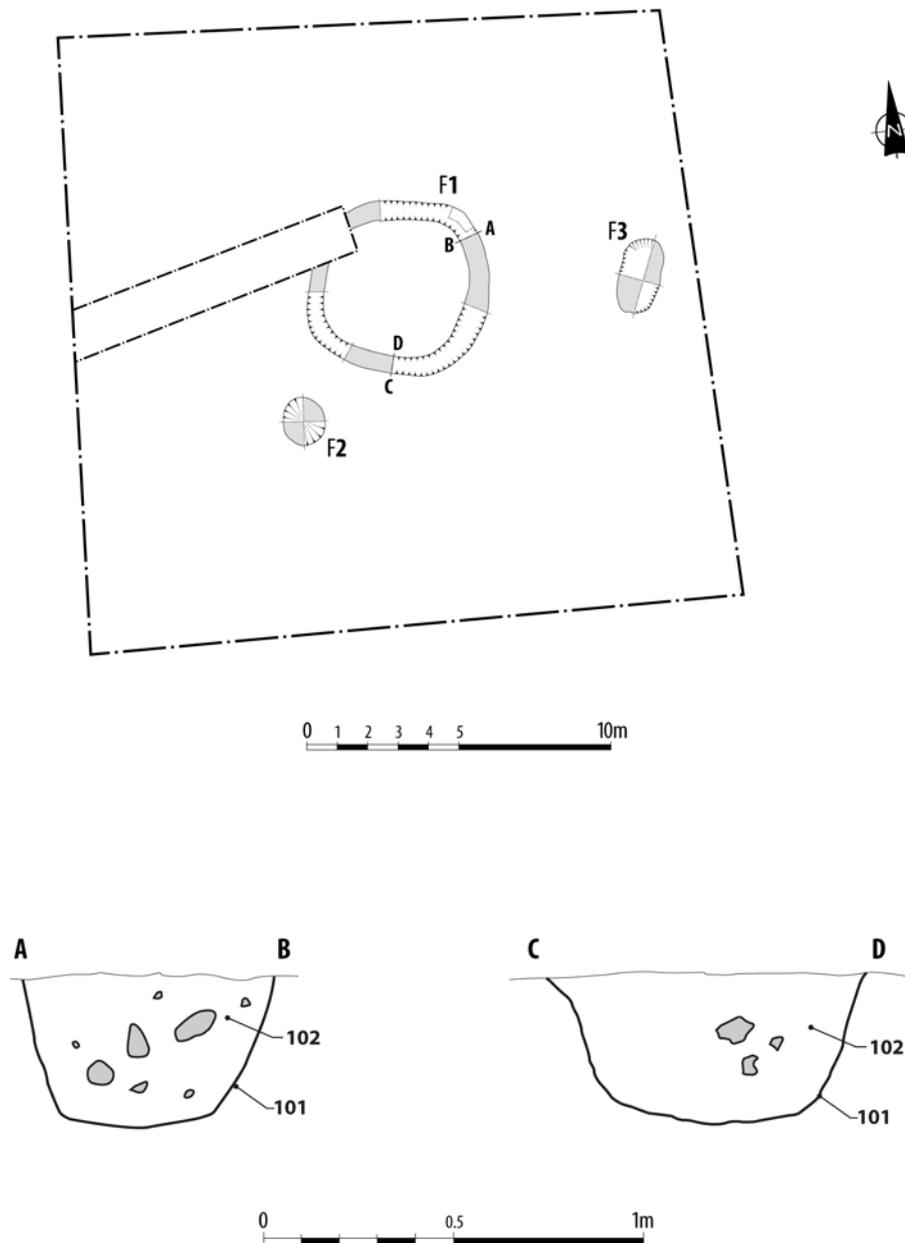

3 THE SQUARE ENCLOSURE, POSSIBLE GRAVE AND ASSOCIATED FEATURES (TRENCH 1)

3.1 Site description

A square-form ditched enclosure measuring $c 5.25 \times 5.5\text{m}$ externally was identified (F1) in Trench 1 (illus 2). There was no break in the ditch and no entrance or internal features were identified. The ditch cut (101) was $c 0.7\text{m}$ wide and 0.3m deep, with a U-shaped profile. The fill comprised fine-grained silt with sparse gravel and stone inclusions. A small quantity of animal bone (one cattle, three indeterminate mammal fragments; C Smith in archive)

was recovered from the fill. A whetstone was found in this area during the evaluation topsoil strip. No datable finds or other organic material were recovered from the fill.

Two pits filled with stony silt were located within this trench, within 5m of the enclosure. F2 was a shallow circular pit $c 1\text{m}$ in diameter and 0.2m deep, located to the south-west of the enclosure. It produced one small chunk of chert. A shallow oval pit, F3, was located to the east of the enclosure. It was aligned roughly north to south and measured



Illus 2 Trench 1 plan and sections

2.3m long, 1.6m wide and 0.5m deep. It contained fragments of a human skeleton (left leg and feet) in very poor condition and was probably a truncated grave. Anderson ([below](#)) suggests that the skeleton may have been originally articulated.

3.2 Human skeletal remains, by Sue Anderson

Fragments of human bone were collected from F3. The pieces consisted of fragments of the lower left leg and both feet, specifically the lower left tibia, parts of the left talus and calcaneus, the proximal halves of the left first to third metatarsals, and the right proximal hallucial phalanx. The bones were probably articulated at the time of deposition, suggesting that the feature in which they were found was a grave.

The bones were in poor to fair condition, the long bone fragments consisting of flakes of the outermost layers only. The surfaces of the tarsal and metatarsal bones were also separating from the cancellous bone.

All epiphyses of the surviving bones were fully fused at the time of death, indicating that the individual was an adult. There were no specific ageing indicators, other than a lack of any degenerative change. Although nothing was measurable, the bones appeared to be of average size but were not robust. The individual may be female, but the evidence is inconclusive.

One genetic trait was present, namely a double anterior calcaneal facet; this trait is relatively common in most archaeological populations. There was an area of porosity on the joint surface of the distal left tibia, but this was likely to have been caused by post-mortem erosion.

In summary, the remains represent the lower left

leg and one right toe of a mature adult, possibly female.

3.3 Radiocarbon dating

A piece of human bone was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a result of 2530 ± 30 BP (800–540 cal BC at 2σ), placing it in the Late Bronze Age or very early part of the Iron Age.

3.4 Discussion

Excavation of the square enclosure F1 did not produce any dating evidence or anything which might indicate its purpose. The ditch fill contained fragments of animal bone which could represent domestic refuse, but are most likely to have been deposited after the feature went out of use. Pits surrounded the feature, but the only finds of any significance from these were fragmentary human skeletal remains from pit F3, which probably formed part of an articulated burial. The bone was in very poor condition and the remainder of the skeleton is likely to have been lost due to the acidic nature of the soil.

The date of the bone from F3 is broadly contemporary with the dates from the pre-Christian burial pits at Dryburn Bridge ([Dunwell 2007](#), table 11). Both F2 and F3 had similar characteristics to the burial pits there, being of similar size and shape to several of them, although F3 was longer (by some 40cm) than the longest burials at Dryburn Bridge. Unfortunately, with so little of the interment surviving, the position of the burial within the grave is unknown and further comparison with other excavated cemetery sites would be futile.